



Ninilchik Traditional Council

P.O. Box 39070

Ninilchik, Alaska 99639

Phone: 907 567-3313 / Fax: 907 567-3308

E-mail: ntc@ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov

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October 26, 2016

The Honorable Senator Murkowski
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski,

My name is Ivan Z. Encelewski, Executive Director for the Ninilchik Traditional Council, governing body for the Ninilchik Village Tribe. I am writing to ask for your support to ensure Alaskans continue to have access to affordable broadband telehealth services in rural villages. The Rural Health Care Universal Service Support budget has remained static for 20 years and must be increased. The current \$400 million budget remains at the initial level set in 1997, despite inflation, advances in technology and increased demand for services. The FCC expects that demand may exceed the cap for the first time in funding year 2016. An equivalent budget today, adjusted for inflation, would be about \$600 million.

Rural Health Care Universal Service Support is essential to enable providers to deliver affordable broadband telehealth services in Alaska's rural villages. Alaska received more than \$82 million in rural health care support for 2015, a substantial increase from 2014.

If rural Alaskan villages are to continue to receive the affordable broadband telehealth services they need, the FCC must increase the rural health care budget and index it for inflation, as it recently did with E-rate. The FCC has updated the E-rate budget from \$2.25 billion in 1997 to \$3.94 billion for 2016, and indexed it for inflation, reflecting increases in demand.

The Ninilchik Traditional Council Community Clinic, the primary care facility for the rural village of Ninilchik, appreciates the opportunity to utilize the telehealth services that dramatically improve access to care, accelerate diagnosis and treatment, enable video conferencing for remote consultation with patients, as well as ability to improve the VMware infrastructure between facilities. We recognize the increased need for affordable broadband telehealth services in rural Alaska, as it has certainly enhanced our capability to provide better healthcare service to our rural residents.

We ask that you urge the FCC to increase the rural health care universal service support budget, index it for inflation, and provide for any unused funds to be carried forward to future funding years.

Respectfully,

Ivan Z. Encelewski, Executive Director
Ninilchik Traditional Council

C: Heather Cavanaugh, APR Director - Corporate Communications



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The Honorable Congressman Young
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Young,

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